



BEATRICE JOANNA from *The Changeling* (Middleton/Rowley)
Act IV SC I

For complete text go to: <http://www.tech.org/~cleary/change.html>

This fellow has undone me endlessly:
Never was bride so fearfully distressed.
The more I think upon th' ensuing night,
And whom I am to cope with in embraces -
5 One that's ennobled both in blood and mind,
So clear in understanding (that's my plague now),
Before whose judgment will my fault appear
Like malefactors' crimes before tribunals,
(There is no hiding on't) - the more I dive
10 Into my own distress. How a wise man
Stands for a great calamity! There's no venturing
Into his bed, what course soe'er I light upon,
Without my shame, which may grow up to danger:
He cannot but in justice strangle me
15 As I lie by him, as a cheater use me.
'Tis a precious craft to play with a false die
Before a cunning gamester: here's his closet,
The key left in't, and he abroad i' th' park.
Sure, 'twas forgot; I'll be so bold as look in't.
20 Bless me! A right physician's closet 'tis,
Set round with vials, every one her mark too.
Sure he does practice physic for his own use,
Which may be safely called your great man's wisdom.
What manuscript lies here? *'The Book of Experiment,*
25 *Called Secrets in Nature'* - so 'tis, 'tis so:
"How to know whether a woman be with child or no" -
I hope I am not yet - if he should try, though!
Let me see: folio forty-five - here 'tis,
The leaf tucked down upon't, the place suspicious:
30 "If you would know whether a woman be with child or not, give her
two spoonfuls of the white water in glass C" -
Where's that glass C? Oh, yonder I see't now -
"And if she be with child, she sleeps full twelve hours after; if not,
not."
35 None of that water comes into my belly:
I'll know you from a hundred; I could break you now

Or turn you into milk, and so beguile
The master of the mystery, but I'll look to you.
Ha! That which is next, is ten times worse:
40 "How to know whether a woman be a maid, or not."
If that should be applied, what would become of me?
Belike he has a strong faith of my puri
That never yet made proof; but this he calls
"A merry sleight, but true experiment' -
45 The author, 'Antonius Mizaldus':
Give the party you suspect the quantity of a spoonful of the water in
the glass M, which upon her that is a maid makes three several
effects: 'twill make her incontinently gape, then fall into a sudden
sneezing, last into a violent laughing - else dull, heavy, and
50 lumpish."
Where had I been?
I fear it, yet 'tis seven hours to bedtime.

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